

# The Idea of University – Historical realisations and threats of disappearing

**Nusret Isanović, PhD**

Islamic Pedagogical Faculty in Zenica

## Summary

After so much time, we are still facing ambiguities concerning the origin, formation and development of the idea of university and, especially, concerning its originating period in the Medieval Ages. What is certain is that the idea and reality of university is not result of the efforts of a single civilization and a historical epoch. Accordingly, the author argues that the idea of higher education and its first rudimentary forms had not originated from the West, but from the East, from the ancient India and China, as well as from the ancient Greece and the early Byzantium. The paper poses arguments for the stance that the idea of higher education that delivered the Medieval University and its first historical forms belongs to Muslim mind. Later on, it would contribute to emergence of the Medieval Western European model of university and partly would intercede its concrete realizations. In the following parts, the author develops discourse about the origins of the Medieval model of university and its fullest institutional formation in the 13<sup>th</sup> century; it deals with threats to the idea of university presented during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. The last idea of university was developed by I. Kant. His idea, along with the classicist idea of education, would enable Humboldt to develop the overall concept of university that was brought to reality

by establishing the Humboldt University of Berlin. In the final part, the paper treats the Bologna reform of Higher Education, crisis of university and disappearing of the idea of university, its acquiescence to the political and economic principles and the logics of the market.

**Key words:** *the idea of university, the Medieval university, Muslim mind, Humboldt's model, Bologna reform*

## Introduction

UNIVERSITY REPRESENTS the axial institution of the Western-European World of culture. In its self-perception, university is an exclusive creation of the very European mind, having the status of “the European institution *par excellence*” (Rüegg, 2003: xix). University dominates over the horizon of intellectual history of Europe, especially over its history of scholarship and research, philosophy and theology. In the diverse cultural-historical landscape of the West, university over the time constituted itself as a congregation (*pantèōn*) of some of its most exquisite spiritual powers; it has become the focal point of the grand spiritual movements of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, and also as one of the most recognizable markers of the idea of freedom, search for the truth and intellectual independence, the symbol of scholarly standard and dignity of the human mind.

Until the times of declining Modernism, the university was meant to be a privileged area for gaining the highest levels of education and realization of the idea of knowledge and, to a certain level, for keeping the consciousness about its uniqueness and wholeness. The university was a place where Western Europe, encouraged by Greek philosophy mediated by Islam, used to recognize and collect the foundational powers of its mind and form them into the exquisite and in the history of the civilization unique method of thought, diversely and to the final consequences realized in the scholarship and rationality. The university was also a place where the destiny of reconciliation of the European spirit with itself had begun. There happened the encounter between European tradition and modernity, its spirituality and profanity; there have met, for the first time in the Western-European history – this time in the efforts of systematic learning and research – theology, philosophy

and scholarship, and has begun frequently dynamic, but mutually enriching and superposed conversation between them. This conversation has essentially marked the intellectual character of the West and until the postmodern times, despite the huge threats by betrayals and falls, it stayed alive, self-reflecting and efficient.

### **Pre-history of the Idea of University**

Although we have reached the end of university and the disappearance of higher education, and despite their current depriving over-maturity and attained their full realization, there are still some ambiguities related to the origins, formation and development of the idea of university, especially concerning its origins in the Medieval Ages.

In the first place, the idea of higher education had not, as it is predominantly thought, originated from the West, nor did it have its first historical realizations in the form of university, according to rich evidence. The birthplace of the idea of higher education and its further rudimentary institutional formations was the East. The idea and reality of the university also is not only the creation of a single civilization.

They were intermediated by the intellectual powers of various grand cultures of the World, primarily the Asian ones. At the end of the second and in the beginning of first millennium BC in India, Veda, Upanishad and knowledge compatible to them were taught at the centers of higher learning. In order to head Vedic rituals, young Brahmans in their long educational journey were obliged to excel in the great amount of formal knowledge contained in the six ancillary disciplines called *vedāṅgam*. In addition to the spiritual knowledge, grammar, metrics and etymology, they learned medicine, astronomy (*dyôṭishah*) necessary especially for establishing the dates and exact times of festivities and rituals.

Buddha himself mentions a town called Taksashilā, the center of ancient Indian culture, “as an ancient university, celebrated for its studies in theology, natural and medical sciences”. (Veljačić, 1978: 118). Centers of higher learning, with hundreds of teachers and thousands of students would eventually, from the period of Grupti, arise from the Buddhist monasteries. At the same time, in the West, the idea of university was completely unknown; the Continent was ruled by the spirit of barbarism and intellectual squalor.

The rise of Confucianism and particularly its grand teachers significantly strengthened the development of the idea of higher education in the ancient China. The realization of the idea was especially aided by the Han dynasty (206-220 BC). One of its rulers, Wu-Ti (140-87 BC) in his efforts for intellectual and political unification of the Kingdom on the basis of the tradition of “hundred schools”, established “The Grand Academy” that would for a long time remain the dominant model of higher education in China.

Thanks to the recommendations of the famous neo-Confucian thinker from the second century BC Tung Chung-Shu, education at the centers of higher learning was based on the transformed knowledge of Confucianism, namely on its *Six Classical Works (Liu Yi)*. At the same time, the famous Chinese system of exams was established. The system enabled that the entrance to the orders of state officials who were governing the state was not depending on the origin or wealth, but on the success in a series of occasional examinations that were organized by the state simultaneously throughout the country and which were open to all members of Chinese society (Yu-Luan, 1971: 240-241).

### **Formation of the Idea of European University and Its Historic Realizations**

In the European cultural area, the idea of higher education was first announced in Plato’s *Republic (Politeia)*. Its direct realizations it had in his Academy and Aristotle’s Lykeion. Plato founded his philosophical school in 387 BC in the Academy, grove and training ground in Kefi in the southwestern part of Athens. It was named after a hero Academos, the protector of the area. Plato used to gather the most talented disciples in the Academy, among whom the most prominent was Aristotle, who, together with his teacher became one of the greatest Greek philosophers.

The instruction at the Academy was based on the model of Pythagorean brotherhood and it strived to impart education on the matrix concept of *Paideia* to the new generation of spiritual aristocracy that would by its thoughtfulness, moral virtues and political skills create new norms for individual and social life of Athens and that would be able to transform the *polis* to *kallipolis*, e.g. the ideal state order (Đurić, 1970: 16-17).

The core of the study was arithmetic, planometric, trigonometry, astronomy, music or harmony. The special significance was given to

mathematics and geometry; the knowledge of these subjects was the prerequisite for the study of philosophy. It was believed that with that knowledge the soul could liberate from the sensual and elevate to the fullest clarity and gain the powers to conceive the essence of beings. Mathematics and geometry prepare the soul for a philosophical way of thinking (*filosofou dianoias*) and for perception of the world of ideas. That is why at the entrance of Plato's Academy there was an inscription saying: *Medeis ageometretos eisito* (*Let no-one without knowledge of geometry enter*). However, none of the subjects were taught separately, but in correlation with other subjects and as a part of the wholeness of knowledge contained in philosophy. All knowledge, in fact, was ought to be submitted to the rules of dialectics, which was the chief characteristic of education (Russel, 2005: 56). The Academy was working over nine centuries, until 529 AD, when its work, out of despise to *pagan scholarship*, was forbidden by Emperor Justinian. Maintaining the classical traditions of knowledge was perceived as *insulting to his Christian principles*.

Upon his arrival to Athens in 335, Aristotle established his own school in the Eastern slopes of the city, in Gymnasium Lykeon (later called *Peripatos* – walking lane) – college and training center not far from the temple of Apollo Lykeios. Lykeion was a school of higher learning that, besides the organized instruction offered scholarly activities. Aristotle himself was giving two types of lectures there – esoteric, deeper and more complex intended to a narrower circle of disciples, those chosen to be committed completely to the secrets of philosophy, and exoteric, open and easier, for the public that was initiated by philosophy. The first type of lectures was organized in the early morning, they treated the most complex questions of philosophy and they were aimed at the whole of knowledge, while the other type of lectures was organized in the afternoon, they were accessible and popular, mostly treating themes from rhetoric and dialectics (see Bošnjak, 1993: 229).

A certain number of historians of higher education assume that the first European “university” emerged at the end of the antiquity, in the early Byzantium. It was established in 425 by Emperor Theodosius II (408-450) in his capital, Constantinople, to serve to the state and the Church. This university, known as Pandidakterion, arose from the reorganization and enlargement of higher school from the period of Constantine the Great. Its foundation and program profile was strongly

contributed by the erudite spouse of Emperor Theodosius Atenaide-Eudokia, daughter of the pagan professor of rhetoric in Athens and wise promoter of enriching encounters and interferences of pagan Greek with Christian Byzantine culture.

Education that was given at Pandidakterion was based on *septem artes liberales* and it managed to continue preserving for a long time knowledge developed during the antiquity. The Constantinian “university” used to be a prominent institution of higher learning; it became the most important and for a long time the most influential education center of the Empire. Ten Greek and ten Latin grammarians held professoriate there, along with five Greek and three Latin rectors, one philosopher and three jurists. This university, where professors teaching in Greek started to over number those teaching in Latin, reflects the emerging aspirations of the European East toward *greicianisation*. Although it would still remain the official language of the Empire, Latin was slowly suppressed by Greek.

During the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055), who was surrounded by persons of high culture and education, Constantinople would again become the center of higher education of the Christendom (Ostrogarski, 202: 1741). Mainly thanks to the efforts of philosopher Michael Psellos, higher schools of philosophy and law were opened in the year 1045. “Philosophic studies were structured by the system of the *trivium* and *quadrivium*: grammar, rhetoric and dialectic were taught at the lower level, while arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy were taught at the higher level. The philosophy represented the ultimate synthesis of the whole knowledge.” (Ibid: 171).

Michael Psellos, known also as “Consul (*Hypatos*) of Philosophers” was heading the education process as well as the whole domain of philosophical education. Constantinople was the birthplace to a new education founded on the Greek philosophical tradition and Roman jurisdiction, which is, in terms of transformation of European Medieval culture, considered as an extraordinary valuable contribution of the Byzantium.

If we accept as true that the idea of university was firstly conceived in Plato’s *Republic* (*Politeia*) and to some extent realized in his Academy and, nearly eight centuries later, in Constantinian Pandidakterion, then we can claim that the idea of higher learning that comprises in itself the powers from which the Medieval university emerged is indeed a crea-

tion of the Medieval mind. This is undisputedly claimed in the works of the authors like Ernst R. Curtius (1998) and George Makdisi (1981). Curtius, for instance, claims that universities “are not – as we frequently read – the extension or the renewal of ancient Roman higher schools and colleges. What is called the ancient Roman university... is where grammar and rhetoric were preserved. Philosophy and other disciplines were far behind.” (Curtius, 1998: 64). This was not Pandidakterion that emerged at the end of Roman period and which some historians of higher education consider as the first European *university* because “nowhere else as in ancient Roman world were those associations with such privileges, continuous educational curricula, diploma degrees (baccalaureus, licentiates, magister, doctor).” (Ibid). Universities are, as Curtius clearly states, “the original creation of the Medieval ages” (Ibid), and the Medieval ages, especially its scholastic philosophy, scholarship and higher education is not possible to understand fully and authentically without tracing back to the model of Islamic civilization and contributions of the Muslim mind.

In the sense of higher education this is, in a certain dimension, proved by George Makdisi, who argues that the Templars, who on their Crusade campaigns stayed in the Muslim East, transferred to the early European higher education (colleges and faculties in Paris, Oxford and Cambridge) the model of Muslim educational institutions that were much earlier developed within mosques madrasahs (Makdisi, 1990).

Therefore, the idea of university that is discussed here and that, in a certain way, connects two great and unfortunately frequently opposite worlds of culture – the Muslim and the European, has emerged in the ambiance of high urban culture of Islamic civilization and belongs to those dimensions of the spirit of Islam that were striving to answer to the new challenges of Muslim community and its evolving intellectual and educational needs from the concept of wholeness and unity of knowledge, the concept of man as the *responsible governor on the Earth* grounding its orientation on the principle of the Truth. The initial maturity and majority for latter *historic realizations* the idea of university also appeared in the Muslim world.

It is necessary here to give notice that almost a century and a half before the conception of universities in Bologna and Paris, there was a university in Muslim Spain. It was the well-renowned University of Cordoba founded by the Khalifa Abd al-Rahman III (912-961) in the first

half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. “It outreached al-Azhar in Cairo and Nizāmiyya in Baghdad and it attracted students, Christian and Muslim, not only from Spain but also from other parts of Europe, Africa and Asia.” (Hitti, 1988: 480). Some of the most prominent thinkers and scholars from the Muslim World taught at the University, among them were historian and linguist Ibn al-Qūṭīyah and philologist Abū ‘Alī al-Qāli. Besides Theology, Jurisprudence, Philology and Philosophy, at the University of Cordoba there were departments of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. Studies in Astronomy, Geography, Medicine, Biology, Agriculture and Botanic were also developed. Apart from University of Cordoba there were Muslim universities in Toledo, Seville, Malaga, and later, till the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, in Granada.<sup>1</sup> On the entrance portal there was an inscription saying: “The world rests upon four values: wisdom of the wise men, justice of the rulers, prayers of the believers and endurance of the courageous.” In that place the Western mind – that was still quite deficient and barbarian and insensitive for the scholarship – encountered the idea of higher education, complex demands of urban life and developed Medieval scholarship and philosophy. It gave the impetus for their application to the own World of culture.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The University of Granada was founded by the Nasrid ruler Yūsuf Abu al-Hajjāj. His juridical program contained theology, philosophy, jurisprudence, medicine, chemistry, physics and astronomy. He enjoyed high reputation and was supported by some Christian scholars as well. (Nasr, 1988: 509). Alongside Muslims, the University of Granada was attended by Christian students as well.

<sup>2</sup> These are, in the horizon of the European understanding of its Medieval intellectual constitution, mainly ignored facts, which witnesses about one fundamental intellectual problem – the problem of (un)readiness to comprehend similarities and, in relation to that, almost consecrational celebration of differences. Essentially, differences are in the nature of the man and the world and their obviousness no one intelligent has to prove. They are affirmed not for reasons to admit and accept them, but for a reason to come to *differentia specifica* in relation to the others and different ones and to show one’s superiority. When it comes to Islam, admitting the debt to its superior civilization in the Medieval Ages, especially to its philosophy, scholarship and higher education, and thus recognizing certain essential intellectual similarities with it is equal to recognizing its participation in shaping the foundations of European spiritual-historical being. The history of European self-perception from the Medieval Ages until today is a history of denial of that participation and that similarity, and that is clearly illustrated in the case of the rise of university.

## The Model of Medieval Western-European University

University, as it is known from the historical perspective of the West, was instituted at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup>, when some types of learning centers emerged in Sicily, the Eastern Italy and France (Bologna, Paris, Salerno). In those centers some prominent professors with broader area of scholarship used to gather numerous students while holding professorate as free lecturers, independent from the Church. Unions of students and professors started to emerge and to form free corporations. Members of those corporations were granted special liberties and privileges that first laid the basics for that form of higher education which in the Middle Ages was called *studio generale* and which later was designated as a university. (see Rüegg, 2003: 5-6). The oldest universities in Europe are considered to be those located in Bologna and Paris. Although it seems quite unclear, it is supposed that they emerged at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, more accurately in the year 1088, they formally became *universitatés* not until the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The rise of university happens simultaneously with the birth of the new European Medieval city, which during the previous centuries started to fade away, so its existence at that moment was barely noticeable.

The cities would become *actuators of the progress of work* and the center of *the initial development of Europe*, the topos of its future's basics, while the university was the center of the drama of maturation of the European spirit for some of the most daring thrusts of the human mind. That was the time when the Old Continent was reaching *its prime youth, its first strength in the light of developed feudalism* (Braudel, 1999: 274-281). The medieval city, which started to rise from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century would deliver the need for higher education and university; the city, in fact, in the great extend enabled the rise of the university out of the need for the realization of its growing social and cultural needs.

The establishment of universities, as the central institution of education in the Western Europe, partially denotes a response of the European mind to the fascination by the intellectual achievements of the Muslim World, as well as a product of the need to control it. Centuries before this, Europe was illiterate in terms of scholarship and philosophy. Natural sciences and peripatetic philosophy, thinkers like Plato and Aristotle were unknown to it; their works Europe got to

know only thanks to Arabic translations and relevant commentaries by Muslim authors, especially those well-known ones like Abu Nasr al-Farabi (870-950) and Ibn Rushd (1126-1198).

From the second part of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, mainly through intellectual influences of the Medieval Muslim world, new ideas and new spiritual impetuses started to progress to the West. Traces of Islamic scholars' and philosophers' influences to the European scholarly and scholastic thought were more than obvious. Thanks to Latin translations of works by the most prominent Muslim thinkers like al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali, that thought was moved, forced into action and, in certain dimensions, enabled.

European scholastic would soon establish contact with the works of Ibn Rushd, the most influential Muslim philosopher in the West. Ibn Rushd was a great contributor to the encounter of the West with Aristotle. After centuries of inhibition, the gradual presence of the "new" Aristotelian thought (e.g. *aristotelised* and *averroised* natural science, metaphysics, ethics and political philosophy) had begun. Aristotle's and Ibn Rushd's scholarly and philosophic thought would be the basis for a new activity and creative metamorphosis of the Western mind. That thought would significantly enlarge and enrich the horizons of medieval university education at the West, which was, from its early beginnings based on *septem artes liberales*, inherited from the ancient period. Aristotle's scriptures, just like the scriptures of Muslim thinkers and scholars, were submitted to the Western World through their translations from Arabic to Latin. Special significance was given to Ibn Rushd's translations and commentaries. Latin scholastics came to know them quite early, just a few decades after Ibn Rushd's death, initially through translations by Michale Scott and then by Raymund Martin. "Averroës' commentaries, along with *corpus aristotelicum*, were known at the University of Paris by the year 1230, and by the year 1250, it is obvious, they were generally known." (Bučan, 1988: XLII).

Aristotle's and Ibn Rushd's philosophy, as well as falsification drawn from his thought known as *averroism*, were not connected with church doctrine and its dogmatized theology. Therefore, in the 1280s, the Church ordered the University of Paris, as the most important center of higher education in the Christian World of that time, to forbid equally public and private studies of Ibn Rushd and "new" Aristotle. After the adjustments and "reconciliation" of religious and philosophical

truths (Aristotelian and Ibn Rushdian), which was mainly done by the Dominicans and Franciscans – among them Albert the Great and his disciple Thomas Aquinas – “hazardous” Philosophers at the University of Paris were *purified*, transformed and Christianized.

Along with Islamic “scholastics” and philosophy, which was at the time impregnated with philosophy and theology with the center of study located in Paris, natural sciences also started to find their way to university cathedras. Two universities were especially renowned in this area of study – Bologna and Oxford, where some prominent figures of the time held positions; Robert Grosseteste, the most influential translator from Arabic in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Roger Bacon, among the most relevant Medieval European connoisseurs of scholarly and philosophical works of Muslim authors and Duns Scotus. These thinkers had drawn attention to the significance of mathematics in interpreting nature and they used experiment as the method in their investigations. The focus of the studies at Bologna and Oxford from the very beginning was natural philosophy, jurisprudence and medicine (see Hass, 2007), which paved the path for the later emergence of modern science.

### **The Nature of Medieval University**

Since the early ages, the university had been the center of studying and teaching the liberal arts (*artes liberāles*), which established direct connection between scholarship and teaching. Art here represents every *mind technique of creation* (Jacques Le Goff). According to the concept of understanding knowledge at that time, knowledge is not gained (gathered), but it is sought for, it is to be effective, active and to serve to a certain common mind purpose. Therefore, teachers and students frequently travel from one educational center to another seeking knowledge and at the same time fulfilling the order of Christian mission, to which all of them were submitted. Students had right to freely chose what they would study and with what professor. This concept has certain similarities with the Islamic model of education (*talab al-ilm faridatun* – seeking knowledge is an obligation) from the period before the establishment of madrasah system, which is based on the principle of seeking, not barely gaining knowledge.

Fulfilling the aims of knowledge and education in this way, students and teaches were at the same time contributing to connecting the

fragmented European area, establishing a unique matrix of its medieval higher education and directly participating in the construction of the unique European spirit. This would be witnessed not only in the common religion and the role of the Church, in the unity of dominant artistic forms, the idea of centralization of political power, free flow of goods and capital, but also in the concept and organization of the university and its essentially international nature. The creation of such a university was supported by students and teachers who were coming from almost all parts of the Western Christendom (Koplston/Copleston, 1989: 219). The university was different from other schools (*studium particulare*) because it was *studium universale*, meaning that its students and teachers were coming from the whole of Europe and that diplomas granted there were valid in all Christian countries of the West. Therefore, university in the Medieval ages was not, as it is dominantly thought, “the universality of scholarship” (*universitas litterarum*), but a corporation of those who teach and those who learn, e.g., community of teachers and seekers, descriptively formulated as *societas magistrorum et discipulorum* (Curtius, 1998: 64).

Naturally, the university also became a scholarly institution and affirmed itself as *stadium generale*. It gained certain autonomy, not only in the area of teaching and research, but also in relation to state and Church authorities. This was considered the very heart of the idea of university. In that way it fulfills its real subjectivity, both in scholarship and in education, but also its role in the medieval society. The task of a university was to educate humans on the way to her/his fullest spiritual and moral affirmation and becoming a free and integral person that participates in the wholeness of life with the fullest capacity of her/his human being. In order to dedicate itself to such a role, the university was to be economically free, far from market and the market driven goods exchange.

As the institution of higher education in the real meaning of that word, Western university strengthened its status and gained its complete legality in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when Pope or the Emperor were in charge for issuing licenses for its work. Those licenses enabled significant privileges to professors and students and they were jealously kept (Koplston/Copleston 220). University at that time actually became a corporation (*universitas magistrorum et scholarium*) with special rights of internal jurisdiction, autonomous curriculum formation and instruc-

tion process implementation as well as issuing diplomas and grading the titles (*baccalaureus, licentiates, magister, doctor*).

Students were exempted from military service, while the university was freed from great amount of tax. The academic community was characterized by certain internal openness and democracy, and suspense, independence and closeness to the external world. Liberty and privileges that university gained in the 13<sup>th</sup> century in relation to the Church and the state would become its essential feature during the history and were preserved as its specificity until the present days.

### **Disregard for University in Renaissance and the Enlightenment**

During Renaissance – that courageous European messenger of the Modern times in which that fatal tension between *faith* and *reason*, *Divine* and *human*, *religion* and *humanism* takes place – university falls into crisis and for some time stops being the ruling place of highest level of education. The reason for that is its preservation of the spirit of the Medieval Ages, closeness to the Church and in its still preserved refusal of the intellectual heritage of the ancient Greece and Rome. Education – that aimed at serving the purpose of creating new worlds, this time with clearly human form – was happening outside the university, far from its sometimes rigid laws, norms and rules. The renaissance education strived to contribute to the spiritual wealth of the new world more directly, to contribute to freedom, creativity and joy of living. Its development was supported by – especially in wealthier state-towns of northern Italy – powerful merchants and bankers who constituted libraries, ateliers and scriptoria, collected valuable artifacts and directly supported study, arts, literature and scholarship. With its extra-university education, the Renaissance contributed to the raise of the new, “universal man”; a many-sided person who not only showed mastery of the ancient classics, an appreciation of and even talent for the visual arts, and a concern for the day-to-day affairs of his city, but also aspired to mold his life into a work of art.” (Perry, 2013: 187).

This outdated persistence of university and insufficient correspondence of its knowledge and education to the spirit of the new age would partly remain during the Enlightenment which dominantly instrumental, utilitarian and pragmatic understanding of knowledge,

scholarship and education was ruling Europe at that time. This would, as Immanuel Kant noted, seriously threaten the university. During the Enlightenment there were tendencies towards abolishing university and weakening it because, as it was reckoned, inside its scholarly and education structures it still preserved an *odious spirit of the Medieval Ages*. Only in France at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century all twenty-two universities were closed. Higher education, which was imparted at specialized schools and independent faculties, was based on the principle of utilitarianism and it was meant to intermediate useful and practical knowledge serving for the common good. (Barbarić, 2011: 163).

### Humboldt's Model of University

The crisis of university would be healed by spiritual efforts of some of the greatest minds of German Classicism and Classical idealism: Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Kant, Schelling, Hegel and Wilhelm von Humboldt, whose thought by its contemplative deepness probably *outraced everything that was thought in the West until that time*. (K. Jaspers). Here, the idea of university reached its peak and came to complete consciousness about itself. Education (*Bildung*), especially higher education, through which human mind reaches its maturation and gets capability for many achievements, became crucial theme of thought inside German Classicism and classical idealistic philosophy. Some of its representatives, like Herder and Hegel, developed a philosophy that became the philosophy of education and made direct influence on shaping the notion of higher education in Germany. For Herder, whose importance in Western intellectual history would be difficult to overemphasize because of the quality of his ideas and pervasiveness of his influence, in the very essence of philosophical thought is education. For him, philosophy is, quite simply, the theory of *Bildung*; more precisely, philosophy is the theory of how the individual develops into the sort of organic unity that will constantly work toward the full development of its talents and abilities and that will drive social progress or social *Bildung*. (Good, 2011: 73). *Bildung*, or education of the spirit and mankind, was also the center of Hegel's philosophical interest, which is quite specifically expressed in his well-known work *Phenomenology of Spirit*. This Hegel's work is the most relevant discourse of philosophy of German classical idealism on education of individuals and humankind.

The ultimate, by the time fully defined, idea of university was offered by the greatest philosopher of German classical idealism Immanuel Kant. The unifying horizon of philosophical, theological and political tradition he reckons as unity and organization of university from the essence of man. Thus, for instance, the Divine in man is subject of theological faculty, human body is subject of medical faculty, human relations, as well as relation of the man to superhuman and less-than-human beings is subject of law faculty, while faculty of philosophy, founded on freedom, e.g. autonomy of pure reason, represents faculty of total knowledge. This Kant's idea of university, together with the Classicist idea of university would serve to Wilhelm von Humboldt to develop complete concept of university realized in the University of Berlin, today known as Humboldt's University. This would for a long time remain the most consistent model of university education in Europe. The core idea in it was the conjunction of instruction, scientific research and effort to understand the wholeness of events and the world. It strived to "form *complete*, many-sided, spiritually developed, inspired and morally creative personalities by means of institutional *living* and *complete* collectiveness of those who teach and those who learn." (Ljubimir, 2011: 41). Humboldt's model of university obviously aimed at enabling general spiritual education and forming of complete person, which was primarily possible to achieve via cultivating knowledge from philosophy, history, religion, poetry and art.

According to Humboldt, university realizes its essence in the area of professional knowledge as well as in the area of science and discipline – its development and transmission, because it is what differentiates university from other research and educational institutions. Here we talk about such a science that originates from the deepness of spirit, because only it has the power to form and re-form character. Finally, the condition for university education is of true interest for this kind of science and its further development: "The moment we stop searching for science, or when we conceit that it should not be produced from the deepness of the spirit and start thinking that it can be sequenced by compilation of information, everything is lost completely." (Von Humboldt in Liessmann, 2008: 101).

Humboldt's unique model of university was of universal nature, it possessed powers by which it was able to transgress boundaries of national cultures and geographies; it contained internal integrative spiritual tissue which ensured its spread to the outer world, which was

to be credited primarily to a new, and for that time very powerful idea, of knowledge and scholarship, as well as to a new complete understanding of the essence of the man and her/his existence in the totality of life. Here we talk about a model of university that was a paradigm of contemporary higher education until the 1960s, not only in Europe, but also in the lands that have built remarkable tradition of higher education, such as the USA and Japan.

The time of complete flowering of university has come, but almost at the same time appeared some indications of its long-term crisis and crisis of education at all levels, especially at university level. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century there emerged a typical model of university which grounding idea was the idea of scientific knowledge. Its study program was dominated by the positivist paradigm of scholarship, which considers odious all knowledge that is based on the principle of totality and respect for multiple realities. It was announced that theology, metaphysics and speculative philosophy were not able to constitute common totality with exact, experimental, “natural” sciences. The era of particularization and fragmentation of science has begun *ad absurdum*, followed by denunciation of the idea of education and domination of extra-educational purposes, especially economic and political ones.

### **The Bologna Model of University and Crisis of Education**

With the Bologna process, European university enters the last phase of its currently profound crisis. Unlike Humboldt’s model of university, the Bologna model cannot be said to be founded on the idea of university. It is more determined by the idea of economy and politics, as well as logic of the market. For the first time in the history of university it is openly and unrestrainedly delivered to a definition of extra-scientific and extra-educational powers. Some of them are almost diabolic and therefore fatal for the fate of university and the idea of university. These powers do not allow for anything that is not of their “universal” interest and disposition to remain in the system of their own references staying true to itself and in compliance with its own essence. A university based on this is designed to be prone to economic operations and adapted to ever-changing and growing world while contributing to the development of European societies and knowledge economy. A single European Higher Education Area is established according to the general plan

of erasing borders, expanding and easier manipulation with global market area and standardization of common prerequisites of business and national systems of higher education – all of which are being “harmonized” according to European standards.<sup>3</sup> These aims were defined in the Declaration signed by 29 European ministers in Bologna in 1999. It reflects efforts toward creating a system of higher education that would be competitive at the labor market, compatible with new forms of knowledge production in developed countries and capable of close cooperation between university and industry. Unlike the USA and some other countries, Europe until recently was not paying much attention to the issue of adaptation of the university to the new circumstances and its convergence with the conditions in the globalizing world. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there emerged the need for re-questioning and redefining the role of university and its tuning with changed political, social and economic goals. National university, the generator of spiritual energy of a nation and promoter of its special cultural and national values, is no longer efficient. Its paradigm is wasted and it has to be replaced by the one that would lead to the answers to new questions brought to the university by the integration of the European world.

Therefore, the governments of European countries adopted an act (The Bologna Declaration) in which they defined the basic principles of university reform and marked several characteristic goals to be reached. Those goals and their definitions reflect the nature and “meaning” of the new model of university. In addition to what has been already said, special attention is given to the broader political European process, European society as knowledge society with an irreplaceable role in development, strengthening and enrichment of Europe and its common social and cultural values, and preparing its citizens for the challenges of the new millennium. For this part of the Bologna reform it can be said that it contains elements that connect education with broader social and political reality. However, it is quite obvious that it does not reflect the concept of transformation the highest level of education according

---

<sup>3</sup> As special measures, the Declaration proscribes: building a system based on three-cycle study structure: undergraduate, graduate and doctoral; introduction of the *European Credit Transfer System*; mobility of teachers, researchers and students; promotion of international cooperation, mobility of study programs, instruction and research; quality assurance.

to its idea, the one that used to be in the essence of the constitution of the university. It, for instance, does not respect change in “relations between specific and general knowledge, theoretic and practical, or education and research; accordingly, the question of whether the basis for education (e.g. paradigmatic knowledge) will be taken theology, philosophy, history, language, natural sciences or mathematics, nor it questions the change in university curriculum. As a result of this, the university as such has become an economic endeavor.” (Žunec, 2011: 79).

There are many critics of the Bologna process; some of them, like Konrad Paul Liessmann and M. Prischinger, come from the university. Special threat to the idea of university comes from economization and commercialization of the university, which are spreading and are not possible to be stopped. Economization and commercialization have basically changed the character of the university, they influenced its transformation to a kind of supermarket in a way that suspends its freedom, loosens its scientific and educational efficiency, weakens quality of education and destroys its reputation in society.

The university has changed to the extent that “today we do not anymore ask how different university is compared to a certain historical paradigm, but how it actually stands against a certain idea of education...” (Žunec: 67).

### Concluding Remarks

Just as the name Bologna marked the birth of European university, it could become a sign of the end of its history, symbol of disappearing of forming knowledge and in which human spirit gains its maturity. Nothing has devaluated the European university to such an extent and ignored idea of it as the “Bologna reform”, dominantly perceived as the most efficient and the most complete restructuring of higher education that has ever happened in the world. In fact, it has brought before the university an unconditional demand for new transformation into servant of politics and economy, it has expelled it to the market and left to its cruelty in order to submit it completely to the principle of economy and finally destroy its academic mind. This reform, especially in transition countries, brings university to cheap scientific and educational prostitution and destroys pieces of ethics left to it. It brings the idea of higher education to absurd and disappearing.

Isn't this a sign that our civilization is becoming spiritually worn out, void and realized from its substance, a civilization "that has sacrificed its brightest values and no longer seems to be capable for nothing but to for paralyzed time, for spirituality of consumption and fetishist veneration of growth and merchandises"? (Ashojer, 2007: 222).

## Bibliography

- Ashojer, T. (2007). "Žan Bodrijar (1927-2007) – Posljednji prorok", in: Dejan Aničić (ed.), *Fragmenta Philosophica I.*, Beograd: Karpos
- Barbarić, D. (2011). "Što je obrazovanje?", in: Damir Barbarić (ed.), *Čemu obrazovanje: Razmatranje o budućnosti sveučilišta*, Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, pp. 151-170.
- Bošnjak, B. (1993). *Povijest filozofije: razvoj mišljenja u ideji cjeline*, Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske.
- Bučan, D. (1988). "Ibn Rušd/Averroës", in: *Averroës, Nesuvislost nesuvislosti*, Zagreb: Naprijed
- Curtius, E. R. (1998). *Europska književnost i latinsko srednjovjekovlje*, translated from German by Stjepan Markuš, Zagreb: Naprijed.
- Despot, B. (1991). "Univerzitet kao znanstvena ustanova ili čovjek kao znanstveno robovanje", in: Branko Despot (ed.), *Ideja univerziteta*, Zagreb: Globus, str. 7-30.
- Dibi, Ž. (2001). *Umjetnost i društvo u srednjem veku*, Beograd: Clio.
- Đurić, M. N. (1970). "Platonov život i delo", in: Platon, *Država*, Beograd: Kultura
- Franzen, A. (1993). *Pregled povijesti Crkve*, Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost
- Good, J. A. (2011). "Tradicija njemačkog *bildunga*", trans. by Amina Isanović, Sarajevo: *Odjek*, No. 1-2, spring/summer, pp. 72-76. Original text available from <http://www.philosophy.uncc.edu/mleldrid/SAAP/USC/pbti.html>
- Hass, W. (2007). *Welt im Wandel. Das Hochmittelalter*, Ostfildern
- Hiti, F. (1988). *Istorija Arapa*, Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša
- Ju-Lan, K. (1971). *Istorija kineske filozofije*, Beograd: Nolit
- Koplston, F. (1989). *Istorija filozofije: Srednjovjekovna filozofija (Avgustin – Skot)*, preveo Jovan Babić, Beograd: BIGZ
- Liessmann, K. P. (2011). *Theorie der Unbildung: Die Irrtümer der Wissensgesellschaft*, München, Zürich: Piper
- Ljubimir, D. (2011). "Obrazovanje i sloboda", in: Damir Barbarić (ed.), *Čemu obrazovanje: Razmatranje o budućnosti sveučilišta*, Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, pp. 9-51.
- Makdisi, G. (1981). *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Nasr, S. H. (1987). *Science and Civilization in Islam*, Cambridge: The Islamic Text Society
- Ostrogorski, G. (2002). *Povijest Bizanta: 324.-1453.*, Zagreb: Golden marketing
- Perry, M. (2013). *Western Civilization: A Brief History*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.

- Rüegg, W. (editor), (2003). *A History of the University in Europe I*, Cambridge University Press
- Russell, B. (2005). *Mudrost Zapada*: Split: Marijan tisak
- Veljačić, Č. (1978). *Razmeđa azijskih filozofija I*, Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber
- Žunec, O. (2011). “Sveučilište i cjelina događanja”, in: Damir Barbarić (ed.), *Čemu obrazovanje: Razmatranje o budućnosti sveučilišta*, Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, p. 67-84.